

NORTHERN ROCKIES COORDINATING GROUP
FIRE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Oct. 22-24, 2008

DNRC Southwest Area Land Office, Missoula

In Attendance:

Pam Okon, MTDNRC, Incident Business Coordinator
Eric Heyn, Kootenai NF, Logistics Rep
Lily Huskey Dakota Prairie Grasslands, ND Zone Rep
Sheri Schlader, Lolo NF, SW MT Zone Rep
Ann Vogt, BLM, Equipment Rep
Joli Pavelis BLM, Billings, Eastern MT Zone Rep
Scott Waldron, Fire Service Org. Liaison
Ken Homik, IDL, North ID Zone Rep
Jane Haker, USDA-FS R1, Incident Business Coordinator
Joyce Anderson, L&C NF, Central MT Zone Rep
Jeanne Robertson, Kootenai NF, Contracting
Debby Wesselius, USFS-R1 Buying Team Rep
Biddy Simet, Glacier Park, NW MT Zone Rep
Tony Lubke, Bitterroot Dispatch, Dispatch Liaison
Tim Murphy, NRCG Contractor Liaison
Ted Mead, Chief of Fire and Aviation, DNRC, NRCG BOD Liaison

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

Accomplishments: 2008 Plan of Work

2008 Plan of Work/Accomplishment report was reviewed without changes. Will be presented to the BOD for signature in November.

Charter Updates:

Made minor changes to committee structure and membership/participation rotation. Revisions will need to go to BOD for signature. Need to go to BOD (through Ted) for Ops liaison.

2008 Fire Season Issues:

Several issues were presented from this fire season which the committee addressed, including:

- AD/EFF Guidelines language in Chapter 10
- APMC Guidelines vs. direction in the IIBHM
- Standard operating procedures for unoperated equipment
- Clear direction for our finance sections for workers compensation. We need clarification from the states (MT and ID) for their SOPs on claims. Some of this comes out of the MT Legislative subcommittee and Dept. of Labor for doing compliance checks on workers' comp claims. They've visited fire camps to follow up on investigations. Some of the contractors may be out there without coverage, so they've been following up for

compliance. We need to know what they need, what they can do and what we need to provide them.

- Dispatch centers are allowing negotiations for AD positions so that folks can get higher rates. Maybe we can strengthen the wording in Chapter 10 about hiring guidelines to explain that ADs are hired and paid as ordered based on the incident need.
- Need clarification on definition of normal wear and tear for agency-owned equipment, like saws and what is the allowable incident replacement. Eric will put together an issue paper explaining the holes in the system, then we can work with the Logistics community and others to put together guidelines.
- Revisit the standard gear cubic inches and weights in the Mobilization Guide. Really a dispatch/mobilization issue. Could be elevated to the writers of the standard guidelines in the Mobilization Guides.
- Add dates on the links for items on our webpage so we can tell what is most current.
- Ambulance rates for local government.
- Lowboys: mob in/mob out is not liked by some folks. Many vendor issues and payment issues arose. These issues need to be captured and presented to Ops.
- EMAC mobilization and payment issues. An easy fix to the issue would be language in the IIBMH something to the effect: "EMAC orders will be dispatched in accordance with the IIBMH Chapter 50."
- Pam brought forward a MT-DNRC Resource Rate Form that local government folks can take with them to incidents to explain how the finance section needs to deal with folks.

Future Training Needs:

Highlights from the Training Committee meeting:

- Getting finance components into NRTC and other zone courses. The Training Committee is enthusiastic about it. The training coordinators will go through their courses and see if a finance component is appropriate. They'll follow up with Lily fairly soon.
- We need to develop an agenda/content/focus for these presentations.
- Training Committee is looking into developing an S-320 course. Need to research some templates for development of Type-3 Incident training.
- I-Suite for Locals: Training Committee discussed how the classes went and return-on-investment.
- Looking at potential for "Online University" for some courses, including S-260. Target completion date is Sept 2009. S230, S231, S290 are also included. This may help with training opportunities in the age of diminished travel budgets.
- There's a proposal to do regional engine academies. The NW MT Zone has a DNRC Engine academy and it includes a mini S260/S261.
- Finance/Logistics Workshop: was also discussed at the Training Committee. May try to combine with IMT meetings to reduce travel needs.
- They wanted to know about success for taking minutes at the IMT meetings. Kathy Elzing had notes and posted them for two months, then pulled them. We consider this unsuccessful.
- Fire 101: Need to pull together a cadre and an agenda and see where we can host the sessions within zones.

- The Training Working Team has been tasked with refreshers this year. The BLM is not hosting the DVD refreshers anymore. The Training Working Team will produce a video for the refresher.

I-Suite for Locals:

- From Training Committee – useful and successful. Needs to target more of our Type 4 fires. Using the Type 1 content in the generic training may not be appropriate. Course revision is in process.
- Do we need a “refresher” for I-Suite for folks who need to be updated rather than take the whole course.
- There’s a need for IFL, there’s a need for Fire 101, and there may be a need for a combination of both based on the training model from DNRC.

Fire Procurement/Fire 101:

- Refresher that’s a different objective from IFL.
- Sheri uses a pre-season update session for changes to the IIBMh and some I-Suite.
- DNRC instructs local government folks for package processing for payment.
- Fire 101 could be designed as an explanation of how fire works – including mobilization/dispatch/qualifications. Look at Sheri’s model for the Lolo updates too.

Thursday, October 23, 2008

VIPR / Acquisition update – Tim Murphy and Jane Haker.

Tim gave an update and summary on Competitive Sourcing (Best Value).

2008 Issues:

- Driving time for contractors: need a little clarification in the blue pages explaining DOT regs vs. agency regs.
- 16 hour days: not a guarantee
- Dept. of Labor Pay
- MT Worker’s Compensation
 - 170 compliance checks: 14 non-compliant

More work is expected this year with the MT Legislature concerning contractor issues with the Best Value/Dispatch system.

New position: IACR (Interagency Contract Rep)

Tim handed out the draft 310-1 guideline, position description and taskbook for review and comment.

2009-2010 Plans

- New Generation Fire Shelters will be required in 2010 for contractors
- Contract equipment “typing” will not change until multi-year contracts are renewed (2010)
- Boundaryless Dispatch

- Level 2 eAuthentication required for contractors to access VIPR
- Performance Evaluations: Contractor Performance System (CPS)
 - Could possibly use clarification on the processing procedure for contractor performance evaluations.

Northern Rockies Incident Procurement Update

Jane presented a PowerPoint for comment. It explained the switch from EaTIS to VIPR and the impact it will have on contractors/procurement and dispatch.

By the end of next week, get comments to Jane on the presentations.

Finance representation at training courses:

Need to develop our content and need to contact lead instructor/coordinator for time slot.

Course:	Date:	Representative:
S-359 Med Unit Leader	11/12-14	Jane Haker
PIO2	11/17-21	Jane Haker
OSC2	12/8-12	Lily Huskey
Helo Manager Refresher	5/4-6-Butte	Biddy Simet
Helo Manager Refresher	2/23-25 CDA	Ken Homik
IMS	2/2-6	Jane Haker
ASGS	2/17-20	Pam Okon/Matt
SOF2	2/9-13	Scott Waldron
DIVS	4/6-10	Joyce Anderson/Kevin Erickson
S-372 Helicop Manager	5/18-22	Pam Okon/Matt
Logistics Unit Leader	5/4-9	Sheri Schlader/Biddy Simet

Need from Training Committee:

- Zone training calendars so that we can plan for our zone reps to assist with finance information as needed.
- How does NRTC determine which courses to sponsor each year? How does the needs analysis work?
- How do we get our input to the NRTC for finance training needs?
Sheri will partner Lily on some of the training issues.

Subcommittee to put together our content:

Biddy Simet, Lily Huskey, Joyce Anderson with input from Jeanne Robertson and/or Debby Wesselius for contracting.

Other training commitments from our committee:

I-Suite (Biddy-lead): Need instructors. Names were offered for follow-up. Check with Tyler Hackney for instructing and computer set up.

S-460 (Sheri-lead): Working on instructors. Bertalee is available, Jean Richardson is interested, Jeannie Vanmiederman. Will check with current FSC to see if they've had M-410 and can assist with instruction.

Fire Procurement Training:

- Last year's vendor delivery did not really meet our needs. A Northern Rockies specific training may better suit our desire to prepare mini-buying teams.
- Suggestion from Pam: put a subcommittee together to develop content for 2010 delivery. Volunteers: Biddy, Ann Vogt. Seek out other folks in the zone who may be able to help with local fire support and procurement. Joyce will help us seek out others.

Other Items and Discussions:

eI-Suite data call:

Reply due Nov 8. Put our comments together. Combine all of our comments and get them in to Joyce by first week of November. Key in on future business needs.

Meeting location:

Discussed moving the Business Committee meetings between Missoula and one other location. Billings for the fall (October) meeting and Missoula for the winter (Feb/March) meeting.

More training:

Type 3 Finance Skill Set and training:

National issue that the USFS is discussing. Trying to frame what the skill set is that's required for Type 3 fires. Jane wanted the committee to know that this is a topic of discussion. Any thoughts of the skill set could be routed to Jane.

Unoperated Equipment:

Rental Vehicles: (How to manage) Joyce had a spreadsheet of approved vendors (from the DNRC solicitation) and a log sheet for dispatch to help them keep track of vehicles that they order and potentially reassign to different fires.

Cost containment ideas for rental cars.

Pam suggested that we create an issue paper documenting the issues related to rental cars that impact fire costs. Jane knows of some folks who have been working on issues related to rental cars. Will obtain some information from a meeting and will relay it back to us.

Supplements:

Since we use the NRCG logo for the supplements, updates no longer need to be led by the Forest Service. Any agency can be responsible for creating and publishing the supplements. Once the NRCG Amendments are done, the business coordinators will take them to the individual agencies to get them adopted.

Committee members who will work on chapter updates:

Lead: Ken Homik – will collect all of the work

Zero Code: Pam

Chapter 10: Pam (EFF) and Jane (AD)

Chapter 20: Ann and Lily

Chapter 30: Joyce and Eric

Chapter 40: Debby Wesselius
Chapter 50: Ken and Pam
Chapter 70: Joyce Anderson
Chapter 80: Joyce Anderson

AD/EFF Guidelines:

Where did the “shortage” categories come from? Do we need to change the needs-analysis process? Lily will look at this to see revisions or updates are needed.

AD/EFF Drivers:

Review the policy – change the title because this rental guidance really refers to all personnel. Change all references from “AD/EFF” to “Northern Rockies Resource”

FAQs:

Joyce, Biddy and Lily will review and update for this year.

Chapter 20 Equipment Rate Analysis:

Need Kevin’s input on this. Need to establish methodology and something that we can anchor back to so that we can review the components every year. Indicate in the supplements the components that make up the rate structure. (Rate books, DOT standards, CPI, etc)

Need for rates on additional equipment:

Committee liaisons should contact other committees to see if there are outstanding needs.

For Example:

- ATV / UTV: DNRC folks think we can’t get commercial rental rates. Is there a need to set a rate?
- Weed Washers: They will get I-BPAs until 2011 when they will be solicited. If we put prices in the blue pages, they may influence the solicitation process when it comes up.

Government to Government Rates:

Jane wants to propose to the NRCG Board to hire a contractor to determine what each agency can charge other agencies to recover costs of mobilizing agency equipment. The BOD wants one methodology for all of the agencies. Nobody has time to do this so Jane suggests using a contractor to develop this. Cost of the contractor could be cost-shared or sponsored by the NRCG BOD. Present to BOD at their spring meeting.

Buying Team Recap:

Debby is working on defining what the Northern Rockies Buying Team guidelines are and will be in the future. Will develop a blue page supplement for Chapter 40 to define the roles and responsibilities of Buying Team members for the NR team.

Strengths/Positive:

- Issues among the team are “nesting” issues. They seem to be working well together and they look for ways to settle problems and improve processes.
- Buying Team members took the initiative to bring along trainees who did well and will be in the mix next year.

Weaknesses:

- CO may not have had enough experience. Still need to address this for 2009. Debby is looking across all NR Acquisition Zones to find interested COs.
- New credit cards are coming out. Concerns for the Buying Teams: not sure what impact the new regulations will have. May pull the teams out of rotation early (Nov 15) so that they would finish any late details before the credit cards change at the end of the month.

Debby will try to be proactive this year to get approval for rotation among the acquisition zone leads. Volunteer method didn't work well. She can show that there is a pool of folks available and alternates (WO Folks) so she doesn't foresee staffing issues for next year – but anything can happen.

Friday, October 24, 2008

AD/EFF Drivers: Issues this year included:

Having our ADs have some sort of identification or validation of their driving courses. For USFS need “defensive driving” and valid state license. Contracting Equipment Task Team is meeting in Boise to look at the requirements for drivers and at the tasks that we're asking them to do, like loading and unloading supplies from the vehicles.

Shortage Positions: what are the issues

There are too many

Lily is going to work with IQCS folks in Boise to check the validity of the information we have so we can take another look at the shortage categories.

Miscellaneous Topics:

Incident Signs:

New protocol and forms for ordering and new inventories from each unit were developed for this year. Jane will check with the Logistics Community to see if this information was useful.

APMC/OWCP:

What was the impact of the changes on folks? Would like to know if the information was properly disseminated and how was it implemented on the unit level. Add to our blue pages information from the NAC plan for sending comp for injury paperwork.

Audit Standards:

Our wording for audits was not specific enough for FEMA fires allowing the request for 100% audit. An AOP is in the works for ID and MT to explain the amount and level of documentation that anyone can request for cross-billing and billing cycle using the GAO audit standards as an anchor. Would like to have comments back from other federal agencies by end of November.

Cost share template and methodologies, decision documents:

On the website. Were used this season with some success. This year's tweaks: need better direction on structure protection. Should also add clauses that get used every time. Need to make sure that folks who go out as IBAs understand the methodologies and can really help with cost shares. All of the most recent templates are on our website.

FS Incident Recycling:

USFS Sustainable Operations Pilot Program: Looking again at incident recycling. Incident recycling is really a host unit responsibility. The host unit needs to work with Facilities or some other logistics position to institute the recycling program. .

Dept of Corrections Crews:

ID is revising their agreements. Can they work in other states? DOC needs to work that out among themselves and with the law enforcement community. Pam and Ken will work together on this.

Next Meeting Date:

January 21-23, 2009

Start at 0800 on Wednesday, finish by noon on Friday. Could meet the afternoon of Jan 20th if we have work group items to finish.